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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the graphic strategies available to editors for positioning the day's news. The purposes of the report are: (1) to introduce those in charge of designing the newspaper page to the structural approach to design (the structural approach is defined as incorporating horizontal and vertical structures in the available spaces, while creating visual order), and (2) to provide several graphic strategies that will allow the designer flexibility and functionalism in a variety of design problems. Headline alternatives, the use of white space, borders, and quotations are a few of the strategic tools discussed in detail. Approximately half of the report consists of illustrations of the various strategies suggested. (AEA)

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ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT

FROM THE ANPA NEWS RESEARCH CENTER

No. 27 September 3, 1980

A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

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The Newspaper Editor As Graphic Strategist

by

Mario R. Garcia

HIGHLIGHTS: Although these reports generally contain research articles, this issue is devoted to graphic strategies available to editors for positioning the day's news. Headline alternatives, the use of white space, borders and quotations are a few of the strategic tools this report discusses in detail. Employing graphic arts every day makes the newspaper more attractive and, at the same time, increases the readability of each story and each page in the newspaper.

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Today's newspaper readers live in the midst of an unparalleled graphic explosion that affects many of their daily activities. Billboards, television programs, movies, magazines, mail advertising, product packaging, company logos, airline tickets, menus, birth certificates, and even personal checks, show more visually appealing use of graphics.

Newspapers can be no exception. Wrapping the day's news in a dull package may alienate prospective newspaper readers. This graphic revolution requires that newspaper editors gain a greater sense of graphic awareness. Anyone who served an apprenticeship at a newspaper years ago can remember an aggressive city editor shouting: "Think news." Today's successful city editor has added two other words to his command: "Think graphics."

To think graphically means to invite the reader into each page with attractive, provocative and orderly use of photos, typography and illustrations. It also means to recreate a sense of graphic identity and consistency through every

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page of the newspaper everyday. Although the material presented in this report is devoted to newspaper graphics, it should be remembered that graphic change alone will not save a newspaper, unless it is accompanied by relevant and contemporary thinking in terms of content.

Combining relevant and timely content with attractive graphics should be the aim of every newspaper editor. Today's technological innovations make it easier than ever before to package the news attractively. There is also greater interest, and participation, among newspaper editors in newspaper design seminars and training programs. More newspapers are creating positions for "newspaper designers" who work closely with the news staff to bring the reader a more visually attractive version of the day's news.

The purpose of this report is two-fold:

- To introduce those in charge of designing the page to the structural approach to design.
- To provide several graphic strategies that will allow the designer flexibility and functionalism in a variety of design problems.

The Structural Approach

Although many newspapers have made the technological switch from hot metal to cold type, not all editors have adjusted their "hot type" thinking to accommodate the unlimited design potential of cold type. These editors often hesitate to become "designers" who deal with the general available space and continue to be "makeup men" who deal with inches and columns as isolated units on the page.

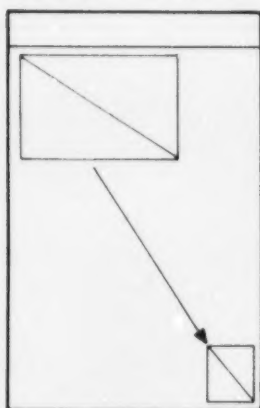
The difference between *makeup* and *design* is that in the first the placement of elements on the page does not follow a preconceived plan or strategy. Copy, photos and headlines are thrown together to occupy the available space. Design, however, involves a planned strategy—a format—which allows the newspaper to create its own sense of visual continuity and sequence.

The page designer's primary concern should be with eye movement. On page one, particularly, initial attraction precedes any other action by the reader. The designer's objective is to grab the reader's attention the moment he sees the page and to create sufficient visual interest to keep the reader's eyes moving on the page.

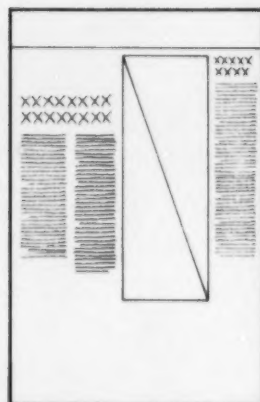
Traditionally, many newspaper editors made up a front page assuming that a reader's journey through the newspaper inevitably began at the upper right corner of the page and continued in a circular motion around the page. This is the type of eye movement pattern that led to positioning the day's lead story on the right. Many editors continue to use this plan to make up their front page, but the concept has become less popular with more innovative editors.

Figure 1

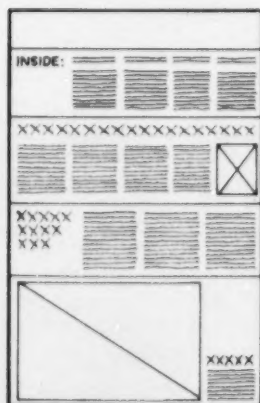
Alternatives for the CVI
(Center of Visual Impact)



Horizontal CVI



Vertical CVI



Lower-Half CVI

Today's page designer controls how he wants the reader's eyes to move on the page. First, the page designer decides on a "Center of Visual Impact" for the page. The CVI is the one element he wants the readers to be visually attracted to first. Ideally, the CVI should generate enough interest or magnetism to command the reader's visual attention at a glance. The CVI is a "target spot" on the page—a movable structure that aims at attracting the reader, regardless of where it is placed. The designer positions the CVI where he feels it will be most functional to attract the reader and to promote further reading in the page. Options here may be as variable as the content of the page. In all cases, the CVI must not stand isolated from the rest of the page.

The CVI should be designed as a distinctively unique structure that will become the primary graphic attention-getter on the page. If a second area of the page offers competition to the CVI, readers become confused by the graphic demands placed upon them. There should be only one strong CVI to a page.

The most common and dramatic way of creating instant graphic appeal on a page is through the use of a photograph. Other strategies to create a strong CVI on the page include the use of typography (large and dominant display type), the use of packaging (boxing of one dominant story and photo) or the use of art (illustrations and charts played large enough to command the instant attention of the reader while conveying visually the highlights of a major story on the page). Figure 1 contains three alternative CVI's.

Color, too, can be used to catch the reader's eye, to emphasize stories, to create visual variety throughout the page and to enhance good design. Advertisers have applied color as a successful graphic strategy for years, and there is no reason why newspaper editors should not use it if it is available to them. Color may even be used to define the CVI on the page and, if used properly, may become the most powerful element on the page. It can definitely serve as the strongest CVI, especially when only one element on the page uses color.

Establishing a strong CVI on each page is one way to assure that readers will be invited to read the contents. *Order* is another way of making sure readers continue to read past their initial visual impulse on the page.

The structural approach to newspaper design is probably the easiest way to organize unrelated content in an orderly and harmonious manner. It is also the most natural way to place elements on the page. In its most natural form, a

newspaper page is nothing more than a vast open white area, receptive to almost anything the designer wishes to locate on it. To treat a page structurally means to incorporate horizontal and vertical structures in the available spaces, while creating visual order.

Creating Graphic Order

Structurally designed pages emphasize order as their most basic principle. Design order is accomplished through a logical progression of elements on the page, from large to small and from small to large. The page is broken up into equal or unequal structures which should vary in size to create visual appeal.

All photographs, copy blocks and headlines maintain a sense of order by restricted placement in certain areas of space. They are squared off. No copy blocks turn or twist around other elements. Uniformity in shape creates order.

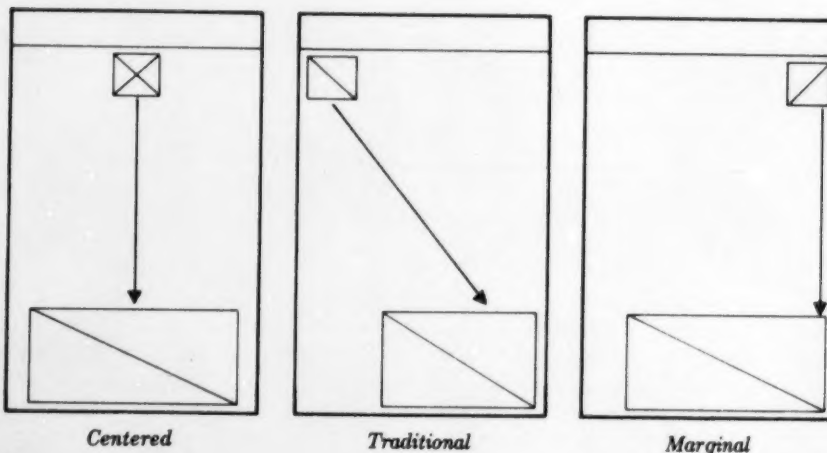
The success of structural design is based on the principle of creating order and visual harmony with one-level stories while emphasizing balance and contrast with progression from large to small and small to large graphic elements, and from vertical to horizontal and horizontal to vertical copy blocks.

The following patterns of design progression for graphic elements illustrate the point:

- *Small to Large.* When this pattern is used, the bottom of the page is likely to be the target for the CVI and consequently for page dominance. The top of the page relies on a small photograph or package. Positioning of graphic elements can be centered, traditional or marginal. Figure 2a illustrates these three design patterns.

- *Large to Small.* Because a large element is placed above the fold, this may be a designer's best way to draw the reader into the page. Logically, the small to

Figure 2
a. Small to Large



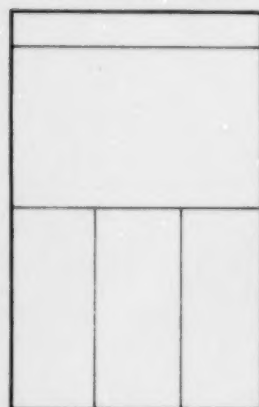
Centered: Effective centered positioning relies on the center of the page for impact. Main graphic is framed by headlines and copy blocks.

Traditional: This pattern calls for the small element to be placed near the upper left hand corner of the page, while the large element is placed below the fold, serving to pull the reader's eye down.

Marginal: Marginal positioning depends on a flush left or right approach, allowing an open center area for copy and headlines, or perhaps a small photo.

Figure 2

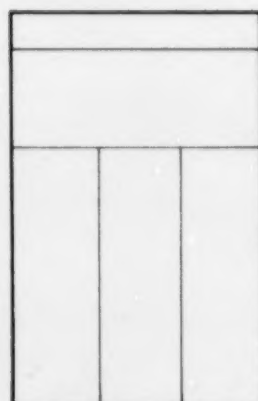
b. Horizontal to Vertical



Center Split



Median Split



Top Horizontal Split

Center Split: Page is treated horizontally above the fold, but divided into vertical sections below the fold.

Median Split: Top two-thirds of the page is divided into unequal horizontal areas, allowing for two or three vertical splits in the lower third.

Top Horizontal Split: Top one-third of the page is treated horizontally, with vertical split dominating bottom portion of the page.

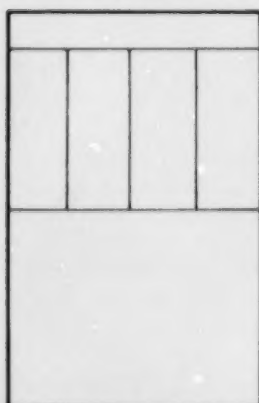
large combination carries more powerful motion, but when a photograph deserves space this option may be worth considering. The three patterns of progression discussed above are simply reversed.

- *Horizontal to Vertical Patterns for Entire Front Page.* As mentioned earlier, a structurally designed page can be divided into equal or unequal areas. When the progression of elements follows a horizontal to vertical pattern, the page opens visually at the top and narrows down to a vertical emphasis below the fold. Figure 2b illustrates three such combinations, but many variations of the same concept can be adapted to individual situations.

- *Vertical to Horizontal Combinations.* An actual reversal of the procedure outlined above takes place in this pattern, with the upper section of the page emphasizing vertical splits, while the bottom carries readers forcefully from left to right. Figure 2c shows three variations of this design pattern.

Figure 2

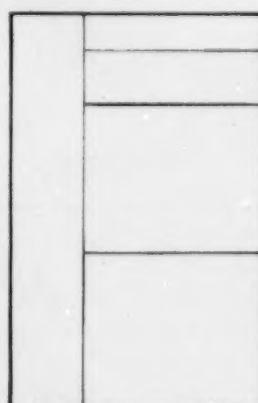
c. Vertical to Horizontal



Center Split



Median Split



Side Vertical Split

Center Split: When there isn't a single story or photo worth highlighting as a lead item on the page, this vertical center split can become most effective.

Median Split: Top two-thirds of the page is divided into unequal vertical areas, allowing for two or three horizontal splits at the bottom of the page. A useful design and ideal for occasions when more than one story deserves top of the page prominence.

Side Vertical Split: Perhaps the most common arrangement, as seen through the front pages of many well-designed newspapers today, is the strong vertical column that cuts down one side of the page and from which a series of horizontal structures originate.

• *Other Patterns.* Two other alternatives for patterns of design are complete horizontal page order and complete vertical page order. Although perhaps we should not label these two as "patterns of design," they are nonetheless options available when designing a page structurally. Figure 2d illustrates these two alternatives.

The design progression patterns presented in this report should not become absolute rules to be followed in all cases. Graphic design is an art and its practitioners should allow themselves room for creativity and innovation. Many times altering and adapting the patterns presented here may lead to a variety of successful and graphically appealing page designs.

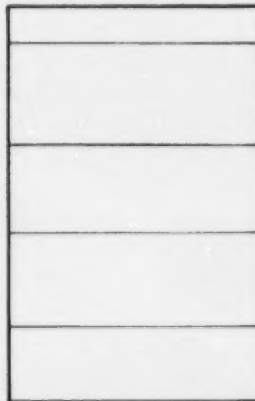
A final word of caution is in order here: too many elements used on the same page tend to confuse and discourage the reader.

Figure 2

d. *Other Patterns*

Complete Horizontal: Page is "sliced" to form equal or unequal horizontal areas. No vertical emphasis appears anywhere and the result can be graphically boring, although it is an ideal situation for placing long copy. This pattern definitely works better on tabloids. If used in a full-sized newspaper, avoid two-way splits where the page's natural fold becomes a visible partition.

Complete Vertical: This is what readers of The Wall Street Journal find on page one of that newspaper daily. It is definitely "up and down" reading all the way. Use with caution and provide with a dose of white space.



Complete Horizontal



Complete Vertical

Graphic Strategies

Today's newspaper editor also must be a graphic strategist.

As soon as the content of each page becomes available, the editor will use his/her knowledge of graphic strategies to present that content in the most appealing manner. A strategy is often defined as a plan or technique for achieving some end. In the case of the newspaper editor, graphic strategies are part of a plan for overall visual impact that will make each page stand out.

This definition of strategy includes the word *plan*. And planning is what this part of the report is about, not using graphics for the sake of graphics, but taking into consideration that each of the strategies presented can—and should be—used to serve a specific purpose.

Although some of the strategies illustrated here may appear new to newspaper editors, they have been used successfully by magazines for years. The influence of magazine graphics on today's newspaper is evident when one reviews the redesign of many dailies. The editors of these newly designed newspapers have changed their attitude to become more open-minded in accepting the need for graphically appealing pages.

Geoff Vincent, former Sunday editor of *The Courier-Journal and Louisville Times*, reinforces both statements:

"I once declared that people with newspaper mentalities had no business producing magazines. I will now amend that to say that in these dangerous times of dying daily newspapers, people with traditional daily newspaper mentalities have no business producing newspapers, either."

Strategies for Positioning Body and Display Type.

You may not be certain what news stories you will read tomorrow. But you can be certain of two things about them when they appear in your newspaper: They will be set in body type and carry a headline. They may have some art.

Body type and display type are recurrent elements on a newspaper page. As such, the designer can count on their presence for unlimited possibilities in effective and harmonious placement of page elements.

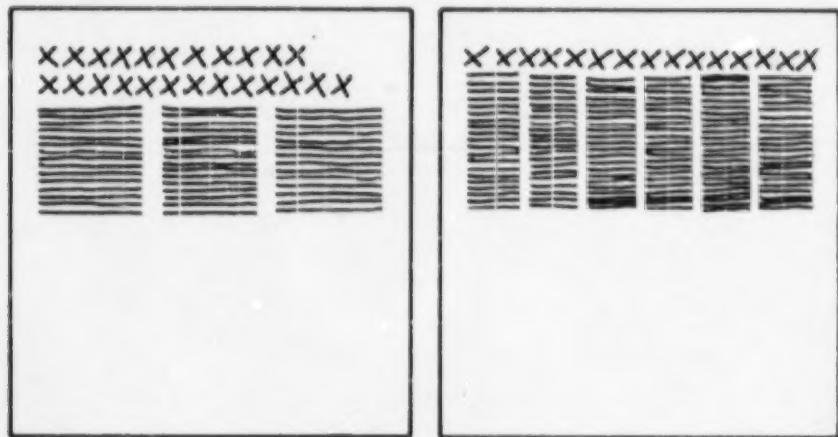
Most newspapers have set styles (format) for the pica width of body type at which columns are set, depending on the number of columns per page and sometimes on the individual page where the material is to appear. For example, newspapers often set their editorials wider than other elements on the editorial page, using larger type and more leading between the lines. The strategies presented here are not meant to alter format or continuity, but to offer insight into other possibilities and to provide variety, especially for handling feature and other specialized material.

- *Long Copy and Horizontal Movement.* The first strategy to learn here is that the longer the copy to be positioned, the greater need to move horizontally rather than vertically. Let's say that a news story runs 12 or more inches. Placing such copy vertically will make it look longer than it is, but horizontal placement will give the reader the optical illusion that the copy is shorter.

- *Long Copy and Wider Column Width.* Another strategy to make long copy appear short is setting articles 12 inches or longer in wide measure. Long and narrow columns will take up more space and give the impression of an extremely long and unpalatable piece of copy that some readers might not want to tackle. Copy set wider, to run in fewer columns, contributes to the overall appearance of the page.



Long Copy and Horizontal Movement



Long Copy and Wider Column Width

- *Long Copy and the Use of Breakers.* Page designers have a responsibility to maintain proper distribution of weight around each page, which means that there will be no congestion of display type anywhere on the page, but at the same time no "gray areas" of body type. A gray area can be defined as a block or section of the page in which the designer has placed body copy exclusive of other bolder elements. Several alternatives are available to avoid gray areas. These include the use of quotations, quotations with head shots and art/illustration. These are discussed separately below. Other possibilities are also mentioned throughout this report.

- *Quotations.* Most well written stories are going to include direct quotes. The page designer can capitalize on these quotes as a design strategy by pulling them out of the story and setting them as "breakers" or "grabbers," depending upon placement in and/or around the copy block as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

a. Quote over Headline

Direct quotes can also be placed over a headline, in either flush right or flush left positioning. Some may even prefer centering quote over the headline, especially if abundant white space is desired.

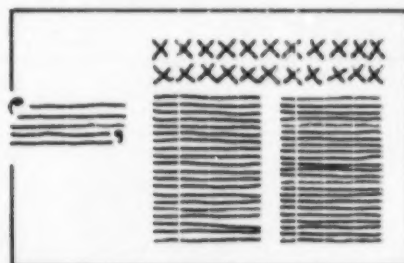


Flush Left Quote

Centered Quote

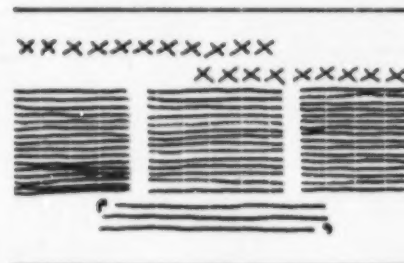
Flush Right Quote

Figure 3
b. Side Quote



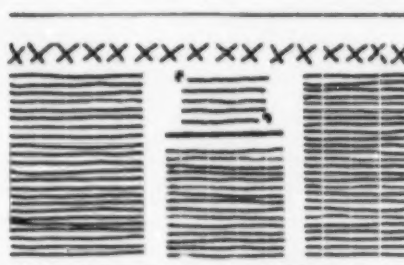
Side Quote: Quote on the side can provide for an attractive package, but not a very practical one.

Figure 3
c. Horizontal Quote



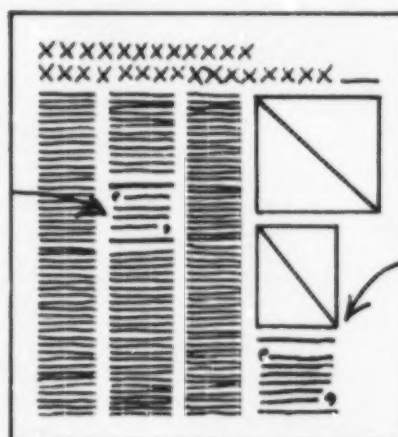
Horizontal Quote: The horizontal quote usually runs at the bottom of the article, ideally with at least a 6-pica indentation on each side.

Figure 3
d. Quote under Headline



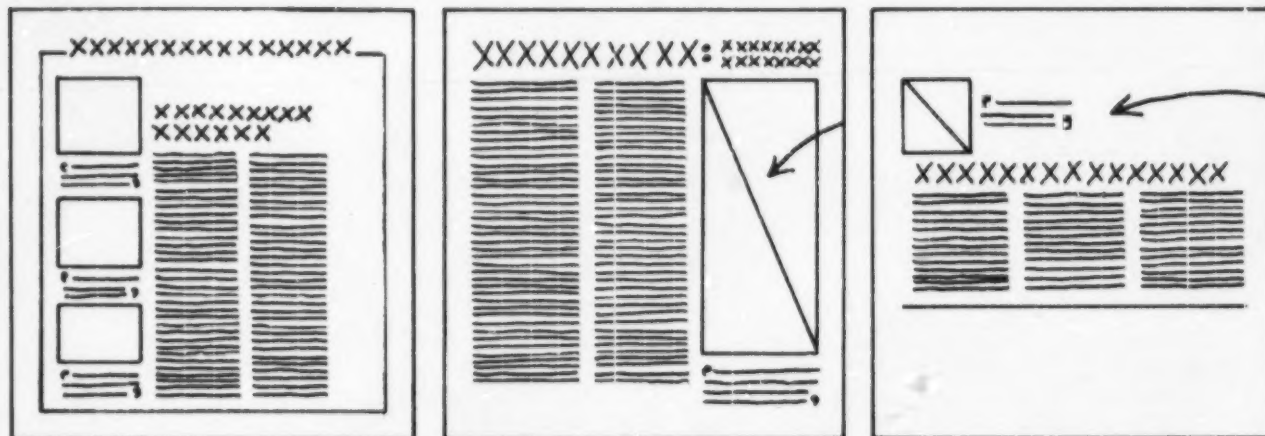
Stories set over an uneven number of columns provide the designer/editor with the space for placement of a direct quote in the middle columns, directly under the headline. The direct quote here is set 1-point size larger than the body copy, with a line under it.

Figure 3
e. Quote as Breaker



The quote as "breaker" is recommended only for extremely long articles, the type that would occupy an entire page. Quote should be placed in strategic places where the reader's train of thought is not suddenly interrupted.

Figure 4



a. Multi-Photo/Quote Arrangement

b. Vertical Photo-Quote Arrangement

Photo width same as that of columns, creating a dramatic vertical slant on the page.

c. Over the Headline Photo-Quote Arrangement

• *Quotations and Head Shots.* Quotations alone can break gray areas and create graphically appealing packages for stories where photos or art are not available. However, another strategy is the use of a direct quote accompanied by a head shot of the person being quoted. Figure 4 contains variations on the theme of using both quotations and head shots in design strategy.

• *The Use of Art and Illustrations.* Many news and feature stories for which photographs are not available may be graphically illustrated through the use of art. Newspapers are making more use of staff artists than ever before. The job of the staff artist is no longer limited to creating large-size and impressive illustrations to go with a full-page Sunday feature. Instead, the artist may—and should—be called upon to create simple and small illustrations that will help the reader relate to a variety of stories, from the news story dealing with the economy to the three-paragraph human interest “brite.”

The newsroom artist is becoming an integral part of the daily newspaper production, especially if he is a news-oriented person who can understand the news and pass on his understanding to readers.

A pioneer newspaper in the use of graphics for daily news use is the *St. Petersburg Times*, whose front page is one of the most graphic in the country. The *Times*' artist, Frank Peters, says that the use of newspaper graphics must not be restricted to process-color or charts. In addition, the *St. Petersburg Times* has experimented with three-dimensional art forms utilizing paper sculptures, the arrangement of props, clay sculpture, baking dough, acrylic paint, colored felt or other material. The finished artwork is photographed in color.

Other experimentation has involved fluorographic drawing and art work, with colored ink applied to mylar (plastic) overlays. Color separations are done on the artist's drawing board, using overlays for each basic color on top of the black artwork. Also used are mechanical separations—probably the most widely used process in producing color graphics—where amberlith overlays are used, with the artist cutting away areas of the mylar film base to achieve color effects.

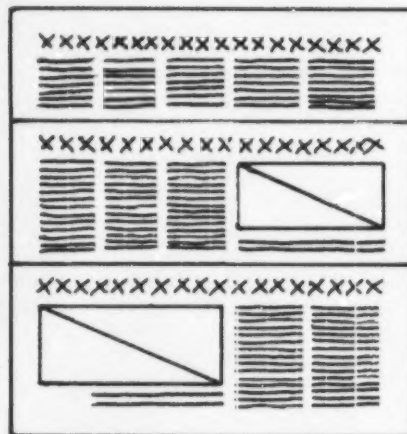
Sometimes a simple dollar sign, which won't occupy more than eight picas across a column by six picas in depth, will serve to attract potential readers to a story about inflation or the state of the dollar abroad. If the story finds itself in a predominantly gray area at the bottom of the page, this simple graphic strategy will immediately single out the story in the eyes of the reader. If a touch of color is applied to the dollar sign, its presence has become more visible, and so has the story.

Maps, charts, and instantly recognizable symbols should figure prominently in the graphic designer's/editor's bag of strategies. A word of caution is in order as we discuss available strategies for page design: these strategies work successfully only when not abused. In fact, the use of any of these strategies in conjunction with one another may create an over-crowded page that will confuse, rather than attract, the reader. For example, if a photograph has been used to accompany a news story, perhaps that additional map or chart available to go with it can be eliminated, or placed elsewhere where the story might be continued or where a sidebar (related story) is carried.

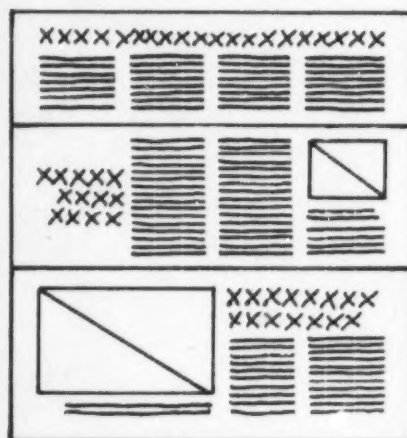
Placement of Headlines

Many alternatives exist today for the placement of headlines. Obviously not every headline must cover the story umbrella style—from left to right. Although such may be the preferred and perhaps the most practical positioning, other strategies can help the designer in a bind and provide the page with some attractive display:

- *Headline on the Side.* Headlines on the side may serve an important purpose, that of keeping a completely horizontal page from looking overcrowded. Let's compare the sample labeled Dummy A with Dummy B. In one example we see a series of horizontal structures slicing the page, while in the other the designer/editor has alternated between the use of headlines over the story and on the side, creating interest and making each story more distinctive and attractive.

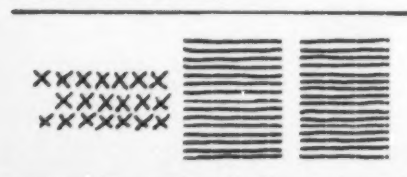


Dummy A

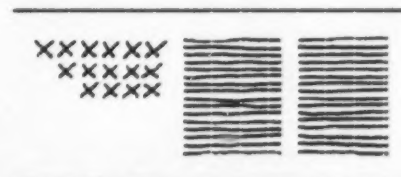


Dummy B

Figure 5
a. Headline on the Side



Full Depth Headline



Reduced Depth Headline

Full Depth Headline: Depth of headline equals depth of columns.

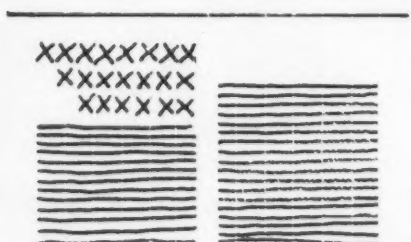
Reduced Depth Headline: Head allows for white space.

Figure 5

b. The Dutch Wrap (headline up)



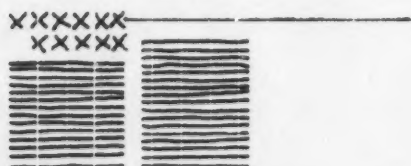
Traditional Dutch Wrap



Dutch Wrap with White Space



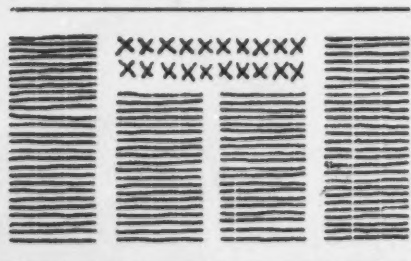
Dutch Wrap with Photo



Another Variation

Figure 5

c. The U-Shape Headline



Within the headline on the side classification, the designer may opt to use a "full depth headline" or a "reduced depth headline," the difference being one of allowing white space in the latter. Figure 5a illustrates these two alternatives.

- **Dutch Wrap Headline.** No one knows for certain whether the Dutch came up with this interesting and not-so-widely-accepted arrangement, but Dutch Wrap is what most designers term it when the headline runs the width of only the first column of a two or three column story. The Dutch Wrap requires a border line running over the entire width of the story, or else the columns not covered by the headline may run confusingly into stories above and below it. Avoid Dutch Wrapping headlines in the middle of the page. Four variations of the Dutch Wrap are shown in Figure 5b.

- **U-Shape Wrap Headline.** The idea here is to create a U-shape with body copy around the headline, which is placed in a centered position between two or more columns. As in the case of the Dutch Wrap, this arrangement requires that the copy block be kept in rectangular shape, with lines above and below to keep those columns not covered by the headline from running into other copy. Figure 5c demonstrates the U-shape wrap.



This page from The Chicago Tribune makes effective use of the U-Shape wrap around major art.

Figure 5
d. The Reverse Kicker

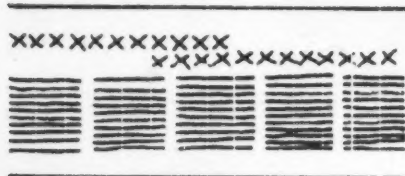
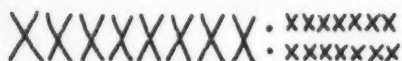


Figure 5
e. The Tripod Headline



The Reverse Kicker: Flush left/flush right is the most common arrangement and is especially useful to inject white space into crowded areas. An unusually long piece of copy for which no art or photos are available presents the ideal situation for the reverse kicker strategy as suggested here.

• **Reverse Kicker.** Although the traditional kicker—a small line that simply added a bit of information to the headline—has become less popular in recent years, the “reverse kicker” continues to be a headline positioning strategy worth considering.

The reverse kicker—also referred to as the “hammer head” in some newsrooms—consists of a large and usually bold kicker, positioned flush left, and which accompanies a smaller and lighter headline, positioned flush right.

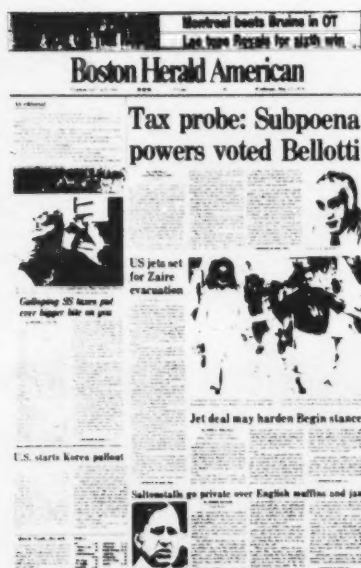
What makes the reverse kicker an effective strategy? It injects white space where otherwise none might exist. It may also call attention to one area of the page where the lack of photos, art or illustration may have created grayness.

As with other headline positioning strategies mentioned in this report, it is best to maintain the reverse kicker at the very top or bottom of the page, areas where the built-in white space that comes with the reverse kicker will lead the eye into the page. An example of a reverse kicker is shown in Figure 5d.

• **Tripod Headline.** A variation of the reverse kicker, but emphasizing the same contrast of large and small type is the “tripod headline,” in which one key word or phrase from the headline is set in bold and larger type than its accompanying line or lines, which are not to exceed the depth of the bolder line as shown in Figure 5e.

One of the greatest challenges presented by graphic design is the freedom to experiment. As long as a design strategy is functional and allows for easy reading, it is worth trying. When it comes to newspapers, the period of graphic experimentation is in its infancy.

The various possible approaches to headline positioning presented here should be used consistently or not at all. For example, an editor who has a preference for tripod headlines should use that approach often to familiarize the reader with the style. As one editor put it, using too many of these headline approaches on rare occasions may do more harm than good and may become “too innovative” for the reader to handle successfully. For example, the *Yakima Herald Republic* in Washington makes frequent use of reverse kickers and tripod headlines, so readers of that newspaper have become familiarized with the style.



The Boston Herald American makes effective use of white space around its nameplate.

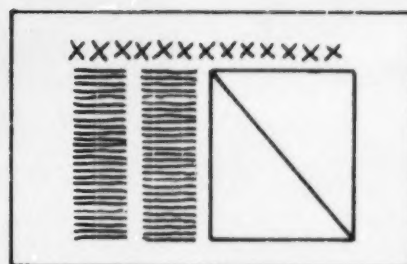
Strategies for Effective Use of White Space.

Designing with white space has never been a stranger to the world of magazines, but it is only in recent years that many newspaper editors have become aware of the effect of white space to improve readability. White space should act as a cushion on the page, especially in overcrowded or totally gray areas. White space provides visual relief for the reader. For practical reasons, newspapers may not use white space as openly or freely as magazines do, except perhaps on inside sections. But as we will see through the illustrations in this section, there is room for effective use of white space throughout the newspaper in a variety of ways.

Newspaper designers may categorize the use of white space in two specific areas: day-to-day white space use and special use of white space.

Day-to-Day Use of White Space. In this first category, the designer comes up with a series of strategic places where white space can become a constant for the page. In a sense, white space as described here would be part of the newspaper's graphic style, another consistent element to follow throughout the publication. The following areas become especially important for this consistent use of white space:

- *In and around the Nameplate.* Because the nameplate is a constant on page one, it also becomes the ideal place to inject appropriate amounts of white space that will allow breathing room for the page, even on days when the page appears crowded otherwise.
- *Between the Nameplate and Rest of the Page Content.* The nameplate and the rest of the page should be separated by an almost invisible strip of white space, ranging between one-fourth and one-half of an inch, space that will help the reader make that visual transition from nameplate to content of the page.
- *Between the Lines of the Headlines.* Determining what the appropriate amount of white space should be between the lines of headlines is difficult simply because not all headlines are alike—some include more letters with ascenders (such as the letter “b”) and descenders (such as the letter “p”) than others. If a staff is to assign a set amount of white space between the lines of a headline, a headline without ascenders and descenders will look more open than one with such elements. All that can be said here is that too much space between the lines of a headline can be as visually undesirable as too little. The designer should trust his eye on this one.
- *Between By-Line and First Paragraph of Story.* By-lines can help the designer by providing an opportunity to inject a small dose of white space between the by-lines and first paragraph of the story.
- *Between Paragraphs in a Story.* Readers need adequate spacing between paragraphs. It may seem insignificant to provide at least one-eighth of an inch of space between two paragraphs, but the situation changes tremendously when one multiplies that times the number of paragraphs that appear on the average page of a daily newspaper.



Symmetrical Framing



Asymmetrical Framing

Notice how frame size is unequal around copy/photo block.

*Figure 6
a. Framing with White Space*



Notice use of symmetrical framing around vertical package on left side of this page from The Chicago Tribune.

It is not only designers who advocate the use of white space. Research conducted by John M. Smith of the University of California at Los Angeles and Maxwell McCombs of Syracuse University shows that of two versions of the same page—one with a small amount of white space and the other with a high amount of white space—readers preferred the high white space version, which yielded both significant improvements in readability and reader preference.

Designer Robert Mellis, graphics director of *The Miami Herald*, says that "white space is the space that is pumped into a page to act as punctuation or breathing room. . ."

Mellis confesses that he is a big fan of white space, but admits that American newspaper editors have been traditionally shy about its use. He questions the use of kickers above the main headline and explains that the kicker has been a traditional means of forcing precious white space into the layout:

"I urge that the kicker be eliminated but that the white space be maintained in the area occupied by the kicker."

Special Uses of White Space are probably more suitable for feature than for news pages. In all cases, let's understand that application of white space is used as part of a strategy, meant to ease readability while creating a more attractive page. White space is the one graphic element that is present on a dummy sheet long before any designing takes place. It is, as we shall see here, one of the most important graphic elements, one that can be strategically used to move the reader's eye in whatever direction the available content dictates:

- *Framing with White Space.* When the designer frames with white space he creates an all-round margin to highlight copy and art/photographs. Framing can be perfectly *symmetrical*—where the margin is the same width on all four sides of the arrangement; or *asymmetrical*—creating visual contrast by using two different sizes for the margins around the main copy and art block. Look at Figure 6a for examples of framing with white space.

- *Blocking with White Space.* Blocking with white space involves the use of white or neutral space to push copy and photographs to one side of the page, up or down. Blocking is ideal for extremely long pieces that are likely to run from the top to the bottom of the page. Let's say that the designer is working with a

Figure 6
b. Blocking with White Space

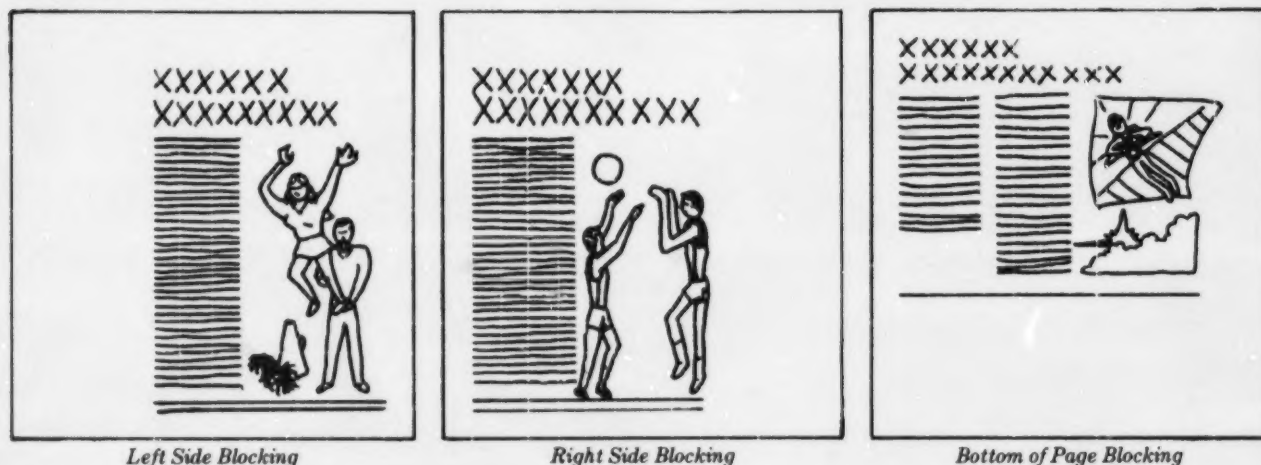
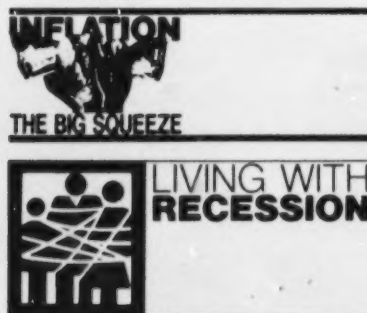


Figure 6
c. Indenting with White Space



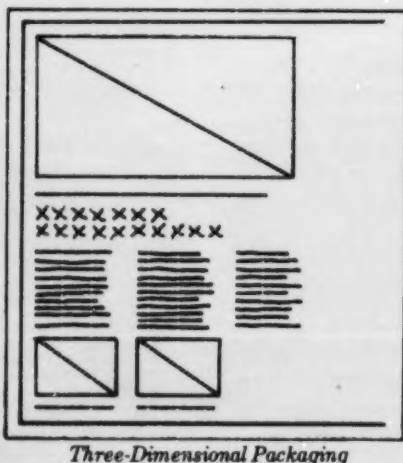
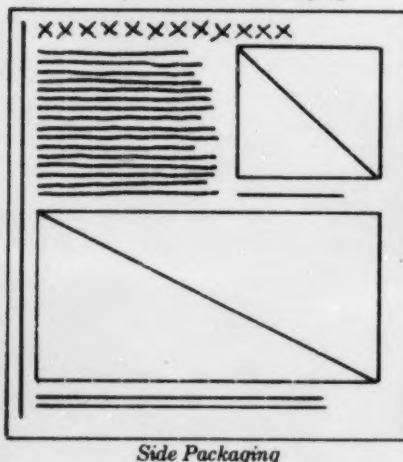
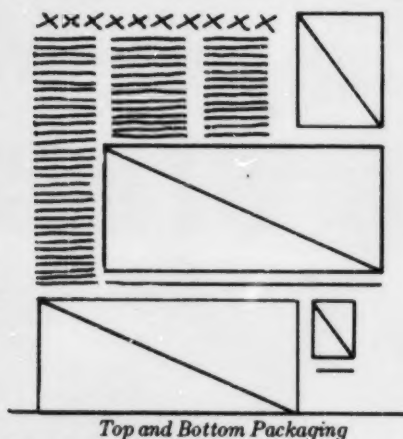
Notice how these special strategies for the use of white space make it easier to develop creative positioning for other elements such as art and copy.

tabloid-size page of five columns, placing a single article and photos on that page. Why not plan to work with four (instead of five) columns, thus providing for a block of white space that will serve to move the reader easier onto a long reading piece?

Editors for whom too much white space or full white space blocking continues to be taboo may begin by designing the page by incorporating elements such as a small photograph or a direct quotation that will take up some of the space, but allow enough white space elsewhere. Three examples of blocking with white space are given in Figure 6b.

- *Indenting with White Space.* To indent with white space the designer creates the shape of a letter "L" or an inverted letter "L" on the page. The idea is to incorporate white space and to make better use of the available space than when blocking is applied. See Figure 6c for two examples of indenting with white space.

Figure 7
Packaging as a Design Strategy
a. Open Packages or Boxes



Some No-No's about White Space. The lack of white space can be visually detrimental to a page. But the poor use—or abuse—of white space can be even worse. White space should be gained on the outside, not the inside, of the page. The designer should “cluster” the copy, headline and photos, allowing for any white space to fall on the outside of the package.

Never trap large amounts of white space between photos, or between headline and copy.

Strategies for Packaging

Packaging is probably the most urgently needed graphic strategy for today's newspaper. It is through packaging that related content is linked so that the reader will find it easier to absorb the material.

Strategies for packaging can be divided into two sections: one dealing with the packaging of entire sections, i.e., Lifestyle, Business or Real Estate, and one dealing with the packaging of a single story and photo, two related stories within a given page, or the full-page package.

Packaging of Entire Sections. In this category, the designer will organize content within a specific area, devoting an entire section to one subject matter. Ordinarily, newspapers arrange their content in such a way that there will be daily “packaged” sections, such as sports and lifestyle. Recently, newspapers have started to publish special sections ranging from sports (seasonal) to consumer topics, using packaging as the best strategy to create continuity and content organization.

Louis Silverstein, assistant managing editor of *The New York Times* and art director for the corporate Times Company, supervises the design and packaging of the *Times'* weekly sections (sports, business, home, leisure and weekend entertainment). He thinks that packaging is a more sound alternative than simply pouring news into available holes:

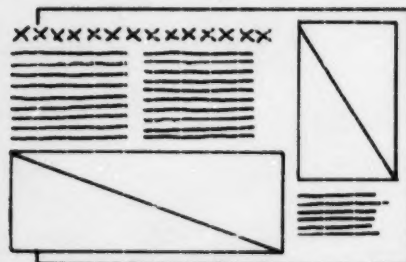
The editors and advertising staff must settle on certain configurations—a prearranged flow of ads and news—and develop a structure or architecture for each section in order to permit attractive graphic treatment of stories. This makes packaging a cooperative, creative endeavor that cuts across different departments such as production, circulation, promotion, news, advertising and the business office.

Open packages depend on top and bottom lines to show content relationships. Ideally, these open packages will make long copy look shorter, while providing access into the page.

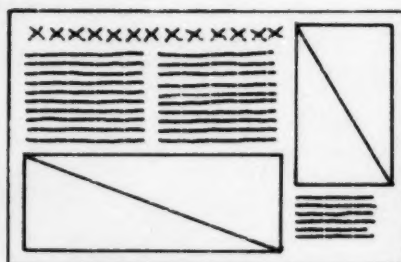
Side Packaging: Supporting line at left provides visual continuity.

Figure 7

b. Open vs. Closed Package



Open Package or Box



Closed Package or Standard Box

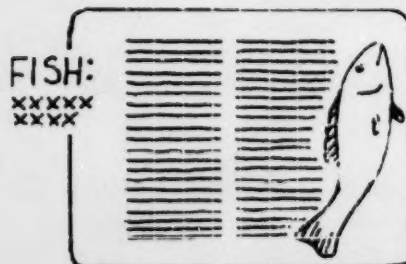
A closed package boxes all stories and/or photos.

Same content in "open box," with copy and one photo protruding.

Closed packages are recommended when copy does not exceed the 30-inch mark. Enclosing long copy tends to make such copy look longer. An open box, however, gives readers the optical illusion of copy being shorter.

Figure 7

c. Closed Packages with Protrusions



Closed packages may allow for a graphic element to "protrude," creating for more attractive graphics and letting the reader's eye gain access to the inside of the package.

Packaging of Individual Stories and/or Photos. Today's hurried reader expects visual organization from his newspaper. Packaging of related stories and photos provides such organization. A package on a newspaper page may range in size from a small (two columns by four inches) to a full page package, depending on content and space availability. Earlier we mentioned the possibility of creating a Center of Visual Impact through a package, in which case there would be no other CVI on the page. That suggestion is worth remembering during our discussion of packaging.

Not every story needs to be packaged. The moment we mention the word *package* we are assuming that column rules or borders will be used to show content relationships. The positioning of such rules and/or borders, however, may vary as shown by the examples. If more than two stories are positioned inside a package, the designer will treat their placement with the same considerations as he would for an open page. For example, two stories within a package should be placed using rules, borders and lines.

Rules, Borders and Lines. In the days of hot type the use of a line or border required more maneuvering of metal than many editors were willing to allow precious time for. In fact, a printer had to go through eight operations to miter the four rules. With today's cold type and photocomposition, a line or rule is as close as the border tape dispenser. In many modern newsrooms, even the tape dispenser has been replaced by computers which are capable of "drawing" lines to form boxes. Much of the thinking related to the use of rules, borders and lines on a page can be summarized as follows:

- Column rules—those vertical lines running up and down on the page—can probably create more visual confusion than order to the page. Column rules occupy what could become white space and, as we have mentioned earlier, white space can act as a visual cushion on the page. Used properly, however, they can bring order out of typographic chaos.
- Borders and lines are the designer's best tool to show relationships—to create packages. As in the case of other typographic elements, borders and rules should be used functionally, primarily to show relationship or to link related copy, headlines and photos.

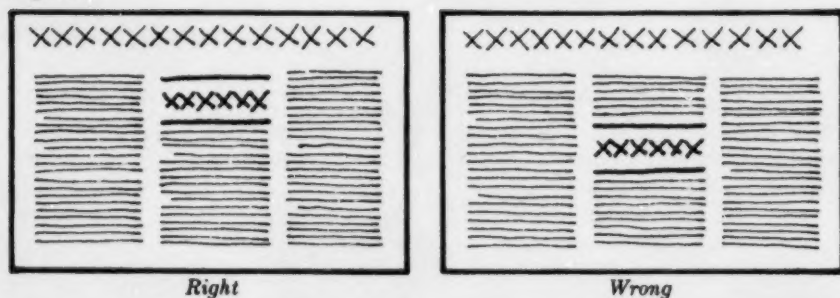
Richard Curtis, assistant managing editor for graphics and features of the *Baltimore News American* advises his staff to use boxes and lines "for good reason, to join, to compartmentalize, to emphasize, but never to confuse."

- Borders and lines can also help in extremely gray areas by providing a visual magnet for a mass of type that could otherwise go unnoticed on the page.
- Avoid heavy or decorative rules that detract from the overall look of the page.
- Let the size and content of the story determine the thickness and style of border that should be used.



This inside page from the Baltimore News American is structurally designed, with effective packaging to emphasize vertical and horizontal movement. Most importantly, visual order prevails.

Figure 8



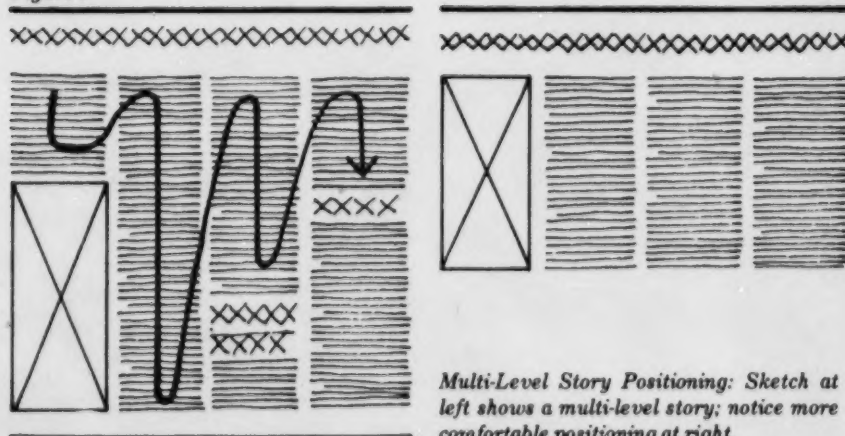
Sketches show right and wrong way of placing copy breakers.

The purpose of packaging is to create content organization while making the page more attractive. Once a package has captured the attention of the reader all he wants to do is to read the copy until he gets the information desired. The graphic designer/editor should not create any graphic "noise" by crowding a package, or by placing quotes, lines, photographs or any other elements in the midst of the reader's copy flow. If any such elements, as "news analysis" or "opinion" standing heads are included, they should be positioned where they will not interfere with copy continuity. Figure 8 shows the right and wrong way of placing copy breakers.

Along the same lines of making the copy more visually appealing, the graphic designer/editor should remember that few readers enjoy struggling with a story that begins at the top of the page, runs nine inches down the page, forces the reader to go back up for the start of the second column and eventually plunges 11 inches before it makes the reader return to the original point.

The alternative? Create one level for the story and maintain it regardless of how many columns that story extends across the page. Preferably, the reader will not have to descend more than six inches before he will go up again—and so on; at any rate, the reader should not be expected to move outside of that six-inch depth range. Figure 9 shows examples of multi-level story positioning.

Figure 9



Multi-Level Story Positioning: Sketch at left shows a multi-level story; notice more comfortable positioning at right.

Summary

This report has made an attempt to provide newspaper editors in charge of page design with guidelines and alternatives that will make the daily task of presenting the news an easier and more enjoyable one.

First we introduced structural design as a method of securing visual order on the page. Then we proceeded to present various strategies for designers/editors to make newspaper content easier to grasp while creating more visually appealing pages.

Design evolves out of content. As such, design strategies—as the ones presented in this report—should be flexible enough to adapt to the day's news.

The most effective graphic strategies will be those that enhance communication and create maximum legibility. Just as important is that such strategies be economical and easy to execute.

Earlier in this report we described today's newspaper editor as a *graphic strategist*. Participants at the American Press Institute Seminar on Newspaper Design not only conclude that editors should become graphic strategists, but also that they acknowledge the need for what they term the newsroom's emerging specialist: a *graphic journalist*.

A graphic journalist, the API participants say, is a hybrid—a person who combines the skill of an artist or designer with that of an editor.

In the case of most American newspapers of the future, it is safe to assert that there will be a demand for such a skill. ■

Illustrations by Greg Daily, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University and Mike Freed, H.H. Herbert School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Oklahoma.

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